

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

IN THE MATTER OF:

DOCKET NUMBER: BC-2022-02841

XXXXXXXXXX

COUNSEL: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

HEARING REQUESTED: YES

APPLICANT'S REQUEST

1. She be considered by a special board (SB) for selective continuation by the CY11A Major Selective Continuation Board.
2. She receive back pay, entitlements, retirement benefits, credits, bonuses and any other damages not specifically listed.
3. She receive compensation at the rank of major (O-4) from her discharge to Jan 16, when she would have accumulated 20 years of service, totaling approximately \$440,000.
4. She receive retirement pay from Jan 16 to present, totaling approximately \$322,000.
5. She be refunded the cost of her medical care, totaling approximately \$80,000.

APPLICANT'S CONTENTIONS

Counsel, on behalf of the applicant, contends her discharge was due to the unlawfully implemented Secretary of the Air Force (SecAF) supplementary instructions that changed the standard applied to selective continuation decisions. Had the proper standard been applied, she would have qualified for selective continuation. The supplementary instructions were unlawful because the SecAF lacked the authority to modify DODI 1320.08, *Continuation of Commissioned Officers on Active Duty and on the Reserve Active Status List*. The SecAF's new instructions violated DODI 1320.08, which states an officer within six years from retirement shall normally be selected for continuation; however, the officer might still be discontinued if there is some "unusual circumstance" such as derogatory information in their file. The SecAF's instruction violated DODI 1320.08 by decreasing the protective threshold from six years to five years.

On 9 Apr 20, the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit (CoAFC) reversed the Court of Federal Claims (CoFC) decision and ruled the SecAF lacked the authority to modify DODI 1320.08. On 23 Oct 20, the CoAFC issued a formal mandate of relief for the plaintiff in *Baude v. United States* and the Air Force convened an SB for the plaintiff on 25 Mar 21.

She was the primary source of income for her family. Because she lacked training and a professional network, she and her family had to move in with her parents until they adjusted to their new economic status. She was also denied service in the Air Force Reserve due to her diagnosis of multiple sclerosis. The decision of the AFBCMR to non-continue the applicant and similarly situated officers was arbitrary, contrary to law and unsupported by substantial evidence. The applicant and other officers deserve a system that follows its own rules and a reviewing forum that does more than rubber-stamp the actions of military officials.

The applicant's complete submission is at Exhibit A.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

The applicant is a former Air Force major (O-4).

On 30 Nov 11, the applicant was honorably discharged from the Regular Air Force in the rank of major with a narrative reason for separation of “Non-selection, Permanent Promotion.” She was credited with 15 years, 4 months, and 21 days of active duty service.

For more information, see the excerpt of the applicant’s record at Exhibit B and the advisory at Exhibit A.

APPLICABLE AUTHORITY

Baude v. United States:

On 9 Apr 20, the CoAFC issued an opinion (*Baude v. United States*) that the named plaintiff demonstrated the AFBCMR’s decision in denying him SB for continuation in the rank of major was arbitrary, contrary to law and unsupported by substantial evidence. The plaintiff was not selected for continuation by the CY11A Major Selective Continuation Board. He was within six years of qualifying for a length of service retirement; however, the SecAF’s modified memorandum of instruction (MOI) to the board narrowed the window for continuation to officers within five years of retirement instead of six years. The CoAFC vacated the CoFC’s earlier opinion for judgment in favor of the government and reversed the denial of the plaintiff’s cross-motion for summary judgment. The CoAFC concluded the SecAF’s instructions to the continuation board did in fact violate DODI 1320.08, *Continuation of Commissioned Officers on Active Duty and on the Reserve Active Status List*, because the SecAF lacked the authority to rewrite the regulation or narrow the protective window or disregard the regulatory presumption in favor of continuation. It stated an officer in the Air Force who holds the grade of O-4 must appear before a promotion board to receive further promotion per 10 U.S.C. §§ 611a and 628(k). An officer who otherwise would be discharged for nonselection of promotion may nevertheless remain in active service if a continuation board selects them for continuation per 10 U.S.C. §§ 611 and 637. A commissioned officer on the active duty list (ADL) in the grade of O-4 shall normally be selected for continuation if the officer will qualify for retirement within six years of the date of continuation. The Secretary of the Military Department in unusual circumstances, such as when an officer’s personnel record contains derogatory information, may discharge the officer involuntarily. In this case there were no unusual circumstances. The plaintiff’s case was remanded to the AFBCMR to convene an SB for selective continuation with a process consistent with DODI 1320.08. On 23 Nov 20, the CoAFC informed the AFBCMR of the Order. Per the CoAFC order, the plaintiff’s case was not reconsidered by the AFBCMR but instead the Air Force convened an SB on 25 Mar 21 for the CY11A Major Selective Continuation Board.

The CY21A Selective Continuation SB convened on 25 Mar 21. The Memorandum of Instruction (MOI) states “This special board will consider officers for selective continuation in place of the CY11A Major LAF Selective Continuation Board and will in addition to using the specific highlighted MOI used by the original board, the following guidance will apply: Majors who will qualify for retirement within six years of the date of continuation (1 Dec 11) shall normally be continued.”

AFI 36-2501, *Officer Promotions and Selective Continuation*, Determining Continuation Period, paragraph 7.11.2 Continue majors until the last day of the month in which he or she is eligible to retire as an officer (normally upon completion of 20 years of total active military service). Majors who possess critical skills may not be continued any longer than the last day of the month in which they complete 24 years of active commissioned service.

10 U.S.C. § 1558(c)(1) Relief Associated with Correction of Certain Actions. The Secretary of the Military Department concerned shall ensure that an involuntarily board separated person receives relief under paragraph (2) or under paragraph (3) if the person, as a result of a correction of the person's military records becomes entitled to retention on or restoration to active duty or to active status in a Reserve component.

10 U.S.C. § 1558(c)(3)(A), If an involuntarily board separated person in paragraph (1) does not consent to restoration of status, rights and entitlements under paragraph (2), the Secretary concerned shall pay that person back pay and allowances (less appropriate offsets) and shall provide that person service credit.

10 U.S.C. § 533(f), A Reserve officer who receives an original appointment as an officer in the Regular Air Force, (1) In the case of an officer on the active duty list (ADL) immediately before that appointment as a regular officer, be appointed in the same grade and with the same DOR as the grade and DOR held by the officer on the ADL list immediately before the appointment. (2) In the case of an officer not on the ADL immediately before that appointment as a regular officer, be appointed in the same grade and with the same DOR as the grade and DOR which the officer would have held had the officer been serving on the ADL on the date of the appointment as a regular officer.

5 U.S.C. § 5533, Dual Pay from More than One Position, an individual is not entitled to receive basic pay from more than one federal position. Receipt of military retired pay is exempt.

AFI 36-2603, *Air Force Board of Corrections to Military Records (AFBCMR), paragraph 7.2.4, Payment of Expenses*, the Air Force has no authority to pay expenses of any kind incurred by or on behalf of an applicant in connection with a correction of military records under 10 U.S.C. §1034 or 1552.

AIR FORCE EVALUATION

AFPC/JA states if the AFBCMR believes the principles articulated in *Baude v. United States* apply to the applicant's case, the Board may grant her request and direct she meet another selective continuation board utilizing the standard of six years from retirement vice five years. If on the other hand, the AFBCMR does not believe the principles articulated in *Baude v. United States* apply, they may deny her request for relief.

The applicant is one of 157 majors who met and were not selected for continuation by the CY11A Major Selective Continuation Board. This followed the second nonselection for promotion to lieutenant colonel by the CY11A Lieutenant Colonel Line of the Air Force (LAF) Central Selection Board (CSB). As a consequence, she was separated from the Air Force on 30 Nov 11. The applicant is requesting SB consideration in light of the CoAFC ruling in *Baude v. United States*. Specifically, the applicant requests to meet another SB utilizing the standard of six years from retirement vice five years.

In 2013, most of the 157 majors not selected for continuation by the CY11A Major LAF Selective Continuation Board filed for relief through the AFBCMR. The Air Force position at that time was that SecAF's decision to modify the selective continuation window from within six years of retirement to five years was within law, DOD, and Air Force boundaries. The AFBCMR agreed and denied relief to all applicants. Thereafter, several of the applicants filed for relief in the CoFC. In Apr 18, that court issued its opinion, confirming the AFBCMR's decisions to deny relief. The court ruled the SecAF possessed the discretion to alter the continuation requirements and did so lawfully. Thereafter, one applicant appealed on behalf of himself and the other applicants to the CoAFC. In Apr 20, that court issued its opinion (*Baude v. United States*), rejecting the AFBCMR's

decisions to deny relief. The court ruled the SecAF did not possess the discretion to alter the continuation requirements and thus, the court sent the case back to the AFBCMR, with instructions to convene an SB for reconsideration of the plaintiff's non-continuation, utilizing the standard of six years from retirement vice five years.

The CoAFC in *Baude v. United States* specifically limited its opinion to the plaintiff because as a non-attorney, he was unable to represent or assert rights on behalf of other parties; thus, the AFBCMR is not bound to consider any other applicant for reconsideration. The applicant argues she should be treated the same as the plaintiff. With the plaintiff, the AFBCMR had no choice but to convene an SB for reconsideration of his non-continuation. With the applicant, the AFBCMR has a choice.

The complete advisory opinion is at Exhibit C.

APPLICANT'S REVIEW OF AIR FORCE EVALUATION

The Board sent a copy of the advisory opinion to the applicant on 2 Nov 22 for comment (Exhibit D) but has received no response.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

1. The application was timely filed.
2. The applicant exhausted all available non-judicial relief before applying to the Board.
3. After reviewing all Exhibits, the Board concludes the applicant is the victim of an error or injustice. The Board notes AFPC/JA states the Board is not bound to consider any other applicant other than the plaintiff in *Baude v. United States*; but also states the Board may grant the applicant's request she meet another selective continuation board utilizing the standard six years from retirement vice five if the Board concluded the principles articulated in *Baude v. United States* applied to the applicant. In this respect, the Board finds the applicant is similarly situated to the plaintiff in *Baude v. United States*. Like the plaintiff, the applicant was considered but not selected for continuation by the CY11A Major Selective Continuation Board. The CoAFC concluded the SecAF's MOI to the CY11A Major Selective Continuation Board narrowing the continuation window from within six years of retirement to within five years of retirement violated DODI 1320.08. Accordingly, the Board finds sufficient evidence has been presented to grant the applicant SB consideration for the CY11A Major Continuation Board. However, for the remainder of the applicant's requests, the evidence presented did not demonstrate an error or injustice, and the Board therefore finds no basis to recommend granting that portion of the applicant's request. In this respect, the applicant's request for associated back pay, retirement benefits and any other entitlements is dependent on the results of the SB for continuation. Accordingly, the Board finds the request is not ripe for adjudication by the Board at this time. With respect to the request for reimbursement of attorney fees, the Board which serves on behalf of the SecAF in the correction of military records has no authority to pay expenses of any kind incurred, to include attorney fees, in connection with a request for correction of military records per 10 U.S.C. § 1034 or §1552. Moreover, the Board finds the recommended correction of the applicant's record is proper, fitting and in accordance with the CoAFC ruling in *Baude v. United States* ordering the plaintiff be considered for an SB for continuation in the rank of major. Therefore, the Board recommends correcting the applicant's records as indicated below.
4. The applicant has not shown a personal appearance, with or without counsel, would materially add to the Board's understanding of the issues involved.

RECOMMENDATION

The pertinent military records of the Department of the Air Force relating to APPLICANT be corrected to show:

a. She be considered by a special board (SB) for continuation for the CY11A Major Selective Continuation Board.

b. The Memorandum of Instruction (MOI) language for the SB be as follows: Majors who will qualify for retirement within six years of the date of Continuation (1 Dec 11) shall normally be continued. It will normally be in the best interest of the Air Force to continue officers with critical skills. I have determined that the following skills are critical to the Air Force: RPA Operators (18X, 11U, 12U); Fighter Pilots (11F); Bomber Pilots (11B); Special Operations CSOs (12S); Combat Rescue Officers/Special Tactics Officers (13D); Catholic Chaplains (52R); Clinical Psychologists (42P); Flight Nurses (46F); and Mental Health Nurses (46P).

However, regarding the remainder of the applicant's request, the Board recommends informing the applicant the evidence did not demonstrate material error or injustice, and the application will only be reconsidered upon receipt of relevant evidence not already considered by the Board.

CERTIFICATION

The following quorum of the Board, as defined in Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2603, *Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR)*, paragraph 1.5, considered Docket Number BC-2022-02841 in Executive Session on 2 Feb 23:

, Chair, AFBCMR
, Panel Member
, Panel Member

All members voted to correct the record. The panel considered the following:

Exhibit A: Application, DD Form 149, w/atchs, undated.
Exhibit B: Documentary evidence, including relevant excerpts from official records.
Exhibit C: Advisory opinion, AFPC/JA, dated 5 May 22.
Exhibit D: Notification of advisory, SAF/MRBC to applicant, dated 2 Nov 22.

Taken together with all Exhibits, this document constitutes the true and complete Record of Proceedings, as required by AFI 36-2603, paragraph 4.11.9.